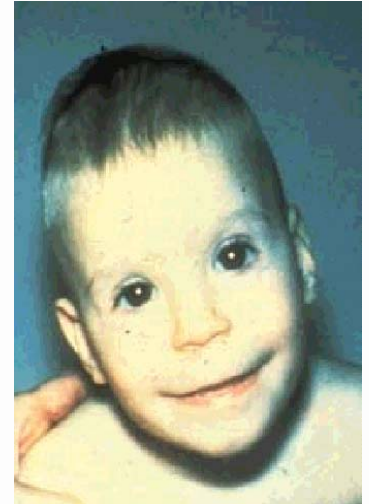


# Fetal Alcohol Syndrome



*Fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) is one of the leading known causes of mental retardation and birth defects. If a woman drinks alcohol during her pregnancy, her baby can be born with FAS, a physically and mentally disabling condition.*

- FAS is characterized by abnormal facial features, growth retardation, and central nervous system problems. Children with FAS often have problems with learning, memory, attention span, problem solving, speech, and hearing. These deficits often lead to problems in school and problems getting along with others.
- FAS is an irreversible, lifelong condition that affects every aspect of a child's life and the lives of the child's family. However, **FAS is 100% preventable** - if a woman does not drink alcohol while she is pregnant.
- If a child was exposed to alcohol during pregnancy but does not have all of the symptoms of FAS, it is possible that he or she may have another prenatal alcohol-related condition, such as alcohol-related neurodevelopmental disorder (ARND). Children with ARND may demonstrate learning and behavioral problems similar to those experienced by children with FAS.



*There is no known safe amount of alcohol, nor a safe time, that a woman can drink while pregnant.*

When a pregnant woman drinks alcohol, so does her unborn baby. There is no known safe dose of alcohol during pregnancy, and there is no safe time during pregnancy to drink alcohol. Therefore, it is recommended that women abstain from drinking at any time during pregnancy or if they are planning a pregnancy, since many women do not know they are pregnant for the first several weeks. Even if a woman is *not* planning a pregnancy, she should limit alcohol consumption if she is sexually active and not using effective contraception because she may be pregnant and not know it.

- All drinks containing alcohol can hurt an unborn baby. A standard 12-ounce can of beer has the same amount of alcohol as a 4-ounce glass of wine or a 1-ounce shot of straight liquor. In addition, some alcoholic drinks, such as malt beverages, wine coolers, and mixed drinks, often contain more alcohol than a 12-ounce can of beer.
- If a pregnant woman *does* drink, it is never too late for her to stop. The sooner a pregnant woman stops drinking, the better it will be for both her baby and herself.
- There is no cure for FAS. However, with early identification and diagnosis, children with FAS can receive services that can help increase their well-being.